

NSC BRIEFING

17 April 1957

SITUATION IN JORDAN

- I. For the moment at least, King Hussain has gained the initiative in the two-week-old Jordan crisis by calling loyal Bedouin fighting units of the army into action.
- A. With their help, he forestalled an attempt by former chief-of-staff Nuwar to move against him last weekend, and has now obtained formation of a "national cabinet," under the premiership of relatively moderate nationalist, Dr. Hussain Khalidi.
1. The new cabinet consists mostly of independents, who represent old-line interests.
 2. The King probably regards this cabinet as a stop-gap, to be replaced shortly with a more effective conservative group.
- B. The anti-Western former Premier Nabulsi remains as foreign minister in the new cabinet. Another pro-Egyptian, Fawzi Mulqi, is minister of education and public works.
- C. However, the key cabinet posts--defense and interior--are held by the moderate Prime Minister Khalidi, and by Said Mufti, one of the king's go-betweens during the crisis.

II. The King's army supporters, mostly Bedouin from East Jordan, form the heart of the combat units of the 25,000-man Jordan Arab Army.

A. Chief of staff Nuwar and a handful of followers have been deported to Syria, where they are consulting Col. Sarraj, the leftist army leader there.

B. Major General Hiyari, a moderate nationalist and an experienced officer, now commands the Army.

1. The police are now directly commanded by Major General Maayta (a former Nuwar supporter, in whose loyalty the king has professed confidence) but are under the general control of the Army.

C. The Army remains the locus of power.

1. Although generally loyal to King Hussain, the Army still contains strongly nationalist elements.

III. Hussain's big task now is to win and hold support of Jordan's turbulent population.

A. The majority, often flouted by rigged elections in the past, supports Nabulsi's brand of anti-Western nationalist and favors union with Syria and Egypt.

B. Although Amman has thus far been the locale of decisive actions, the reaction of Jordan's dominant West Bank population--anti-Western and anti-monarchical Palestinian Arabs--has not yet fully developed.

1. The West Jordanians, including up to 18,000

national guardsmen, are believed plentifully

supplied with arms.

2. Demonstrations and strikes with calls for Hussein's removal, are reported to have taken place in the major towns of West Jordan.

C. The King is now moving with firmness in the capital, however, and combat-ready troops are reportedly deployed throughout Amman, prepared to maintain order.

1. In addition to his army support, Hussein is being backed by the Bedouin tribes which dominate East Jordan, by many of the town merchants, by Christian and Circassian minority groups, and by the militant right-wing Muslim Brotherhood.

IV. Reported movements of Syrian and Iraqi troops into Jordan are unsubstantiated.

A. Hussein may request that the 3,000 Syrian troops which have been deployed in north Jordan for some time, now be withdrawn.

1. Some Jordanian troops have dug in north of Amman to guard against any surprise move by Syrian forces.

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C. King Saud, who also has over 3,000 troops in Jordan has supported King Hussein against his pro-Egyptian

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